INTRODUCTION

Barry Alan Crouch died suddenly on March 13, 2002, at his home in Riverdale, Maryland, after a short bout with cancer. He was sixty-one. He was born in Glendale, California, on February 26, 1941, with his twin brother, Robert. Most of his childhood was spent in Syracuse, Kansas, and later in Norwood, Colorado, where he became a football and basketball star and still holds the school record for the most points scored in one basketball game. Barry went to Mesa State College in Grand Junction and graduated from Western State College of Colorado in Gunnison with a bachelor's degree. Quickly he earned his master's degree at the University of Wyoming and his doctorate at the University of New Mexico in 1970.

While still working on his PhD, Barry embarked upon a series of academic teaching jobs and fellowships that kept him on the move for more than a decade. From 1967 to 1970 he taught at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, where he inspired one of his students, the well-known scholar Arnoldo De León, to become a historian. From 1970 to 1971 he studied at Howard University on an NEH postdoctoral fellowship in black American historical studies. He spent the 1972–1973 academic year at the University of Maryland working as an assistant editor on the Booker T. Washington papers. From 1974 to 1979 he taught at Bowie State College in Bowie, Maryland. Finally, in 1980 he became an assistant professor of history at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C., where he spent the next twenty-one years as a teacher and scholar. Along the way, he received a half dozen research and study grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Barry was a prodigious researcher. During his career he turned out three dozen journal articles, almost as many book reviews, and three monographs (two coauthored). Three more books, including this collection of his articles, will be published posthumously. His career spanned a variety

of interests that always resulted in a publication. His earliest article, on New Mexico senator Dennis Chavez and FDR's court-packing bill, came from his master's thesis. Two journal articles on the conservative reformer Amos A. Lawrence were drawn from his dissertation. Two articles, one comparing the American slave South and ancient Rome and one comparing different slave societies in Latin America, were based upon research in NEH seminars. During his career at Gallaudet, he used primary sources to write several articles on deaf history, and was coauthor (with John Vickery Van Cleve) of the field's major history, *A Place of Their Own: Creating the Deaf Community in America*.

Barry's major contributions to American history, however, lay in two fields: Reconstruction Texas and the bandits of the Wild West. Probably because of his first teaching assignment at Angelo State, Barry developed a lifelong interest in Texas history. Along with Randolph Campbell, James Smallwood, Carl Moneyhon, and a handful of other scholars, Barry began in the 1970s to undo the racist Dunning school interpretation of Reconstruction Texas, which had prevailed since Charles Ramsdell's 1910 monograph, *Reconstruction in Texas*. Barry mined the Freedman's Bureau Records on Texas for a dozen journal articles over a twenty-year period, and in 1992 the University of Texas Press published his monograph *The Freedman's Bureau and Black Texans*. For years, scholars such as Herbert Gutman and Eric Foner relied on conversations with Barry and on dozens of his journal articles for research that went into their major books about the slave family and Reconstruction. It is well known that Barry was one of the earliest practitioners of social history written from the bottom up, his conclusions drawn from prodigious and time-consuming research in Record Group 105 of the Texas Freedman's Bureau. In 1992 David Donald wrote a full-page review of *The Freedman's Bureau and Black Texans* in the Sunday *New York Times Book Review,* an honor rarely accorded historical monographs. The book broke new ground in Reconstruction history, and as Professor Donald remarked, the "episodes in Texas Reconstruction history that Mr. Crouch relates perhaps do more than broad generalizations to explain why the Freedman's Bureau failed, and how we lost the peace after the Civil War."

In his last years, Barry became interested in the bandits who roamed the South during and after the Reconstruction era. His biography *Cullen Montgomery Baker: Reconstruction Desperado,* written with Donaly E. Brice, besides serving as a case study and revisionist treatment of an outlaw, removed the romantic image of these bandits, which continually emerges in the pop literature, television shows, and even documentaries about

this era. A second book, *Murder and Mayhem: The War of Reconstruction in Texas,* cowritten with James M. Smallwood and Larry Peacock, was published after Barry's death and reverses the lost-cause mythology surrounding the Lee-Peacock feud. His last book, *The Governor's Hounds: The Texas State Police, 1870–1873,* also coauthored with Donaly E. Brice, reverses the Dunning school mythology and presents a positive view of the work performed by the state police during Reconstruction.

Before he died, Barry was forced to abandon two projects that were to cap his career: (1) a full-scale treatment of Reconstruction in Texas and (2) a revisionist biography of John Wesley Hardin. Two friends and colleagues have, or will have, completed their own works in these areas. Carl H. Moneyhon has written *Texas after the Civil War: The Struggle of Reconstruction,* a modern revisionist synthesis that replaces Ramsdell's as the major interpretation of Texas Reconstruction, and James M. Smallwood is at work on a revisionist treatment of John Wesley Hardin and other Texas outlaws.

The following dozen articles constitute the core of Crouch's work on Texas Reconstruction. Part I sets the tone by analyzing the shift in Texas Reconstruction historiography, away from the typical Dunning School interpretation. Part II demonstrates the speed at which former slaves tried to reconstitute their families at the end of the war, and how they attempted to achieve fairness in the labor contracts they negotiated with their former slave masters. Part III documents the enormous amount of violence perpetrated against the freedmen in their attempts to attain their political and racial rights. This section contains a pathbreaking essay (Chapter Eight) on how the criminal justice system functioned from the bottom up rather than from the top down, as "penal slavery became one method by which the disgruntled losers in the war punished their former chattels." Part IV analyzes the work of Texas Freedmen's Bureau agents, and their achievements under the most trying circumstances. The article in Chapter Nine was developed more fully in Crouch's 1992 monograph *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* (University of Texas Press). Less well known are the articles on Texas black politicians.

These essays, written over a twenty-six-year period, are conveniently collected here to provide a comprehensive picture of the many facets of Texas Reconstruction.

Larry Madaras
Professor Emeritus
Howard Community College

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THE DANCE OF FREEDOM

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